Our planet is worth the cost of saving

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

November 8, 2018 Thursday

Early Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 516 words

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Dateline: Regina

Body

Planet Earth is sick, very sick.

What does an individual do when faced with a potentially fatal illness? You engage the most expert diagnosticians; you don't seek out quacks to question their diagnosis. You trust the specialists and accept the treatment they recommend; you don't spend treatment dollars on costly court cases to force rejection of treatment.

You know that there will be a financial cost for treatment, but also a cost in personal pain and family sacrifice, but you believe your life and theirs is worth it. So it is with planet Earth.

When the Saskatchewan government was elected, I expected the premier to immediately begin a process for mitigating climate change, the most urgent problem facing the human race.

But what do we get from Premier Moe? He talks "taxes" but not "climate change," as if they are mutually exclusive. Does he not follow the news? The symptoms of the disease: hurricanes, floods, droughts, forest fires, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and polar ice and human migration.

As the suffering ensues and the costs of dealing with disasters climb, a reasonable person would move to treat the disease.

Adapting to the treatment and a new lifestyle are also crucial factors.

When the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed by Canada in 2015, one would have thought that all provincial ministers of the environment would meet immediately with the federal minister, gather all the relevant scientific and economic data, and put in place a national plan to deal with the problems.

The issues are not political; they are scientific and economic.

The federal government got little support and input from most of the provinces, so they are imposing a carbon tax - which is highly recommended by scientists and economists to discourage the use of fossil fuels and to fund new or different technologies. (I wonder how Premier Moe plans to fund the transition to clean energy.)

They could have immediately begun to electrify crosscountry rail lines. Freight should not be transported in gas-guzzling transport trucks.

At the very time when we have to transition to public transportation, the Saskatchewan government shuttered the STC.

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The sensible act would have been to electrify the buses as is done in Europe, Scandinavia, Japan and China.

Hydrogen fuel cell electric buses have potential.

SaskPower could have phased out coal generation of electricity. There is much marginal land in Saskatchewan which could sustain solar or wind farms. Trees could also be planted on marginal land to act as carbon sinks, and as a buffer against soil drifting and drought. Governments could mandate that all new buildings be fitted with solar panels on roofs. Israel has been heating and cooling their buildings with solar power since the 1950s.

We don't have to reinvent the wheel; the technology is out there.

Why aren't our governments pulling together, consulting experts from around the world and sharing the costs of treating the disease? I think the patient is worth life-saving treatment. Don't you?

Verda Petry,

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Load-Date: November 8, 2018

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